

JUSTIFICATION
FOR AN EXCEPTION TO FAIR OPPORTUNITY

1. Contracting Activity: Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
Office of Acquisition Operations
Technology Acquisition Center
23 Christopher Way
Eatontown, NJ 07724
2. Description of Action: This proposed action is for a brand name firm-fixed-price delivery order to be issued against the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Solutions for Enterprise-Wide Procurement (SEWP) V Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC).
3. Description of the Supplies or Services: VA Office of Information and Technology, Service Delivery and Engineering, Enterprise Operations (EO), Mainframe Management Service Line Division has requirements for upgrade of existing EO owned brand name Red Hat Inc. (Red Hat) software and associated maintenance and support. This upgrade is required in support of the Austin Information Technology Center (AIRC) z196 technical refresh project. The refresh will provide additionally needed capacity for a fail-over capability for virtual Linux servers running on the AIRC zEC12 mainframe computing infrastructure and create additional virtual server capacity to support growth of VA users and applications across the enterprise. The period of performance for the software upgrades, maintenance, and support shall be 12 months from the date of award.
4. Statutory Authority: The statutory authority permitting an exception to fair opportunity is Section 41 U.S.C. 4106(c)(2) as implemented by the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) paragraph 16.505(b)(2)(i)(B), entitled "Only one awardee is capable of providing the supplies or services required at the level of quality required because the supplies or services ordered are unique or highly specialized."
5. Rationale Supporting Use of Authority Cited Above: Based on market research, as described in paragraph 8 of this justification, it was determined that limited competition is viable among authorized resellers for the required Red Hat software upgrades, maintenance and support. EO currently uses Red Hat brand software on its mainframe virtual infrastructure. Red Hat is the only brand name software that meets the Government's requirements for providing additional capacity for a fail-over capability for virtual Linux servers within the VA's current mainframe virtual server infrastructure. No other software is compatible with or interoperable with the existing Red Hat software infrastructure components currently integrated in the mainframe virtual infrastructure. For any virtual server infrastructure to function, it must be able to adapt and grow in size (number of servers) to support the applications customers use. In order for the underlying hypervisor (software that creates virtual servers) to manage growth to support applications that need more processing capacity, the operating system in use on the virtual servers must be compatible and interoperable with the existing Red Hat software environment executing the application. Acquiring a different brand operating system for the virtual servers would create a situation in which the existing applications

Austin Information Technology Center (AITC) Mainframe (z196) Technical Refresh (Red Hat), Software and Maintenance
TAC-15-23540

could not be used due to compatibility issues. Therefore, no brand software other than Red Hat can meet all the Government's requirements.

6. Efforts to Obtain Competition: Market research was conducted, details of which are in paragraph 8 of this justification. This effort did not yield any additional sources that can meet the Government's requirements. It was determined however, that limited competition is anticipated among resellers for Red Hat software upgrades, associated maintenance, and support on the NASA SEWP V GWAC.

7. Actions to Increase Competition: The Government will continually conduct market research by surveying the marketplace to determine if there are any other software products that can meet VA's needs.

8. Market Research: The Government's technical staff conducted market research in April 2015 by researching other similar virtual server software from VMware, Sun, Oracle, and Kernal Virtual Machine to ascertain if other products could meet the Government's requirements for interoperability and compatibility with EO's existing mainframe architecture currently composed of brand name Red Hat software. The Government's technical staff determined that the only product that could meet VA's needs was Red Hat brand software, which can be obtained only through Red Hat or an authorized reseller. No other software can interoperate with current AITC mainframe virtual server infrastructure.

Additional market research was conducted in June 2015 by utilizing the NASA SEWP V Provider Lookup Tool. There were numerous resellers identified that can provide Red Hat brand name products under North American Industry Classification System code 541519. If the required Red Hat brand name software upgrades, and associated maintenance and support and are not already on a GWAC holders contract, each contract holder has a dynamic catalog whereby line items can be added based on customer requests; therefore, as long as the required item or service is within scope of the NASA SEWP GWAC, items and services can be added to a GWAC holder's catalog on a daily basis.

9. Other Facts: None.